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Communications Policy of the Government of Canada

Canada

Communications Policy of the Government of Canada

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Effective Date

This policy takes effect on April 1, 2002. It replaces the *Government Communications Policy*, which was issued in 1988, published in the *Treasury Board Administrative Policy Manual, Communications Volume, Chapter 1*, and last revised on November 28, 1996, when it became available in electronic form.

Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that communications across the Government of Canada are well co-ordinated, effectively managed and responsive to the diverse information needs of the public.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Government of Canada to:

1. **Provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programs, services and initiatives.** In the Canadian system of parliamentary democracy and responsible government, the government has a duty to explain its policies and decisions, and to inform the public of its priorities for the country. Information is necessary for Canadians – individually or through representative groups or Members of Parliament – to participate actively and meaningfully in the democratic process. It is required for access to government programs and services. The public has a right to such information.

2. **Communicate in English and in French.** The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* establishes the equal status of English and French as the two official languages of Canada. It enshrines the right of the public to communicate with the Government of Canada in either language. Communications with the public and services to the public must be provided in both languages as required by the *Official Languages Act*. The *Act* affirms the government's commitment to enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada – supporting and assisting their development – and to foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

3. **Ensure that institutions of the Government of Canada are visible, accessible and accountable to the public they serve.** To be accessible and accountable, the government and its institutions must be visible and recognizable wherever they are present. Clear identification allows the public to see the government at work, to access its programs and services, and to assess its activities. Communicating through many channels – from service centres, the telephone and mail to print and broadcast media, the Internet and World Wide Web – the government must identify itself in a distinct, consistent way the public can recognize in all circumstances.

4. **Employ a variety of ways and means to communicate, and provide information in multiple formats to accommodate diverse needs.** Government information must be broadly accessible throughout society. The needs of all Canadians, whose perceptual or physical abilities and language skills are diverse, must be recognized and accommodated. Information must be accessible so citizens, as responsible members of a democratic community, may be aware of, understand, respond to and influence the development and implementation of policies, programs, services and initiatives. Information must be available in multiple formats to ensure equal access. All means of communication – from traditional methods to new technologies – must be used to reach and communicate with Canadians wherever they may reside. Modern government requires the capacity to respond effectively over multiple channels in a 24-hour, global communications environment.

5. **Identify and address communication needs and issues routinely in the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.** Communication enables the exchange of information Canadians and their government rely upon for an effective partnership. Gathering and providing information of importance to the public, government and the democratic process requires professional tools and resources, and effective, accountable management. Internal and external communication requirements must be identified and met when planning, managing or reviewing policies, programs, services or initiatives. Responsible use of public funds to obtain maximum value for taxpayer investments is a fundamental requirement in all communication activities.

6. **Consult the public, listen to and take account of people's interests and concerns when establishing priorities, developing policies, and planning programs and services.** The government's obligation to reach out and communicate with citizens is concomitant with the right of citizens to address and be heard by their government. In a democracy, listening to the public, researching, evaluating and addressing the needs of citizens is critical to the work of government. The government must learn as much as possible about public needs and expectations to respond to them effectively. The dialogue between citizens and their government must be continuous, open, inclusive, relevant, clear, secure and reliable. Communication is a two-way process.

7. **Deliver prompt, courteous and responsive service that is sensitive to the needs and concerns of the public and respectful of individual rights.** Information services must be managed in a citizen-centred and client-focused manner that achieves results for Canadians. Timely and convenient access to government information and services must be available to the public. Access to information and privacy rights, as well as language rights, must be honoured at all times. Canadians value freedom, openness, security, caring and respect. It is important for their government to communicate in a spirit that reflects those values.

8. **Encourage public service managers and employees to communicate openly with the public about policies, programs, services and initiatives they are familiar with and for which they have responsibility.** Openness in government promotes accessibility and accountability. It enables informed public participation in the formulation of policy, ensures fairness in decision-making, and enables the public to assess performance. An open and democratic government implies that all employees have a role in communicating with the public while respecting the constitution and laws of Canada. Public service managers and employees must respect privacy rights, matters before the courts, national security, Cabinet confidences and ministerial responsibility. They serve the public interest best by communicating openly and responsively about policies, programs, services and initiatives they help to administer, while treating sensitive information with the discretion it requires.

9. **Safeguard Canadians' trust and confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Public Service of Canada.** Canadians value an independent, professional public service that treats individuals with respect, fairness and integrity. The value and reputation of public institutions must be honoured. Public service managers and employees are expected to provide information services in a non-partisan fashion consistent with the principles of parliamentary democracy and ministerial responsibility.

10. **Ensure all institutions of the Government of Canada work collaboratively to achieve coherent and effective communications with the public.** As a core activity and shared responsibility touching all aspects of policy and program administration, the communications function involves employees throughout the government working collaboratively. Co-ordination within, between and among institutions is imperative to ensure coherent and consistent communications government-wide. Delivering information services in the best interests of Canadians and their government, meeting internal and external communication needs efficiently and effectively, is a co-operative endeavour.

Application and Authority

This policy is issued under the authority of the *Financial Administration Act* (*FAA*), Section 7, and applies to all institutions of the Government of Canada identified in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Act*. All other public institutions subject to the *FAA*, particularly Crown corporations identified in Schedule III (Parts 1 and 2), are encouraged to become familiar with this policy and to apply its principles to their own communications management.

Policy Requirements

1. Informing and Serving Canadians

Institutions of the Government of Canada must provide the public with open access to information about policies, programs, services and initiatives. Information for public use must be disseminated or readily available in all regions of Canada using all forms of media practical. The communication needs of Canadians travelling or residing abroad must be taken into account as well so they, too, have access to information on policies, programs, services and initiatives.

To assure quality service that meets the information needs of all Canadians, institutions must ensure that:

(a) the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Official Languages Act*, including all regulations and policies flowing from it, are respected at all times;

(b) trained and knowledgeable staff provide information services to the public;

(c) service is timely, courteous, fair, efficient and offered with all due regard for the privacy, safety, convenience, comfort and needs of the public;

(d) a variety of new and traditional methods of communication are used to accommodate the needs of a diverse public;

(e) published information is available on request in multiple formats to accommodate persons with disabilities;

(f) information in all formats is well-identified as being from the Government of Canada according to the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*;

(g) information requests or inquiries from the public are responded to promptly without undue recourse to the *Access to Information Act*;

(h) prompt and clear explanations are provided when information requested by the public is unavailable;

(i) information is available on the standard of service an institution provides to the public, including timelines for responding to inquiries, mail and complaints;

(j) opportunities are available for the public to provide feedback on major policies, programs, services and initiatives, and that such feedback is carefully considered in reviews or evaluations of same to help make improvements; and

(k) information about an institution's mission, structure, programs and services is provided to Communication Canada for public access through *1 800 O-Canada* and the *Canada Site* portal.

2. *Information Free of Charge*

Institutions must provide information free of charge when the information is in their control and it:

(a) is needed by individuals to make use of a service or program for which they are eligible;

(b) explains the rights, entitlements and obligations of individuals;

(c) consists of personal information requested by the individual whom it concerns;

(d) informs the public about dangers or risks to health, safety or the environment;

(e) is required for public understanding of a major new priority, law, policy, program or service; or

(f) is requested under the *Access to Information Act* and fees are waived at the discretion of the head of the institution.

3. *Plain Language*

An institution's duty to inform the public includes the obligation to communicate effectively. Information about policies, programs, services and initiatives must be clear, relevant, objective, easy to understand and useful.

To ensure clarity and consistency of information, plain language and proper grammar must be used in all communication with the public. This principle also applies to internal communications, as well as to information prepared for Parliament or any other official body, whether delivered in writing or in speech.

4. *Official Languages*

In all communications, institutions must respect the equality of status of the two official languages as established by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and given effect through the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*. Institutions must adhere to all legal requirements and regulations derived from these statutory provisions.

Institutions must identify and respect all official language requirements that apply when engaging in any of the communication activities stipulated in this policy. Institutions must abide by the Treasury Board's official language policies, which set out various

requirements with respect to communications. They must also abide by the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program* concerning the visual presentation of the official languages in communications or information materials.

5. *Corporate Identity*

Clear and consistent corporate identity is required to assist the public in recognizing, accessing and assessing the policies, programs, services and initiatives of the Government of Canada.

To maintain a recognizable and unified corporate identity throughout the government, institutions must ensure that their buildings, facilities, programs, services and activities are clearly identified in accordance with the *Federal Identity Program (FIP).* Institutions must manage communication design and presentation along common lines and in a co-ordinated manner consistent with *FIP*.

In identifying contributions or activities, institutions must give prominence to the official symbols of the Government of Canada. Institutions must display the "Canada" wordmark, which is the global identifier of the Government of Canada, in all information and communication materials, regardless of medium, for internal or external use.

Institutions must also adhere to the Treasury Board's *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines,* which apply to the design and presentation of online communications.

6. *Reflecting Diversity*

Institutions must ensure their publications and other communication materials depict the diverse nature of Canadian society in a fair, representative and inclusive manner. The requirements of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* must be respected at all times.

Institutions must be sensitive to differences among and within the various regions of Canada. They must ensure balance in their communication plans and activities so that the needs and interests of local and regional populations are reflected and addressed. (See *Requirement 15* for further direction on managing regional communications.)

7. *Environment Analysis*

To evaluate and address public needs and expectations effectively – to anticipate issues that may arise and to formulate appropriate response strategies – institutions must routinely monitor and analyze the public environment as it relates to their policies, programs, services and initiatives. Institutions must use a variety of tools to assess the environment in which they operate, including citizen feedback, enquiry analysis, media monitoring and opinion research.

As an element of effective environment analysis, institutions must identify and track current and emerging public issues and trends reported by the media. Communication Canada offers institutions a centrally appropriated electronic media monitoring service. Institutions that choose to use this service must register with Communication Canada for access.

8. Public Opinion Research

Institutions use public opinion research to better understand Canadian society and to identify citizen needs and expectations. It is used to assess the public's response to proposals or to possible changes or initiatives; to assess the effectiveness of policies, programs and services; to measure progress in service improvement; to evaluate the effectiveness of communication activities such as advertising; and for marketing purposes, among other applications.

Institutions must adhere to the requirements of the Treasury Board's *Contracting Policy* and *Common Services Policy* when contracting public opinion research to quantify, qualify or evaluate the views, attitudes or perceptions of a given population. Institutions must ensure the quality and value of research they commission or produce.

Institutions must:

(a) submit their plans, strategies and instruments for public opinion research projects and initiatives to Communication Canada as the technical and co-ordinating authority for Government of Canada public opinion research;

(b) obtain a project registration number from Communication Canada for authorization to contract public opinion research services;

(c) contract public opinion research services through Public Works and Government Services Canada;

(d) forward copies of final reports of public opinion research to Communication Canada, which in turn deposits them promptly with the Library of Parliament and the National Library of Canada;

(e) share research results with other Government of Canada departments and agencies that have an interest in the findings;

(f) ensure that the principles of fair information practices embodied in Sections 4 to 8 of the Privacy Act are respected in any public opinion research; and

(g) release final research results to the public promptly on request.

9. Consultation and Citizen Engagement

Communication requirements must be taken into account in the planning, management and evaluation of consultation and citizen engagement activities. Open and responsive communications are critical to the success of public consultations.

Communications staff provide advice and support to managers who plan, implement or evaluate an institution's consultation and citizen engagement processes. Managers responsible for consulting the public work collaboratively with communications staff, who prepare and help to implement communication plans and strategies.

Institutions must inform Canadians about opportunities to participate in public consultation and citizen engagement initiatives. This may be done through Web sites, letters of invitation, notices to the media, paid advertising and other vehicles normally used by institutions to communicate with the public, including publishing notices in the *Canada Gazette* (see Requirement 27(d)).

Institutions must ensure that communication or information materials prepared for consultative purposes are well identified as being from the Government of Canada, according to the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*.

10. Risk Communication

Institutions must anticipate and assess potential risks to public health and safety, to the environment, and to policy and program administration. Usually understood to embody an element of possible danger, hazard or threat, risk in the broadest sense is associated with a willingness to take a chance on uncertainty in order to achieve some potential gain.

Plans and strategies for communicating risk to the public must be developed as needed. To communicate about risk effectively, institutions must demonstrate interest and concern for all opinions and positions, understand different perspectives, and respect their underlying premises. Effective risk management requires open and transparent communication among differing or even opposing interests.

Institutions must:

(a) foster open dialogue with the public on issues involving risk and build a climate of trust, credibility and understanding by being forthcoming about facts, evidence and information concerning risk assessments and decisions taken;

(b) facilitate the interactive exchange of information on risk and risk-related factors among interested parties inside and outside of their institution;

(c) respond to public perceptions and provide factual information to address misconceptions or misunderstandings about risk;

(d) integrate environment analysis and communication planning and strategy into risk assessment and decision-making processes; and

(e) follow Treasury Board policy direction on risk management in the delivery of programs and services, and consult Treasury Board guidance on the subject, which includes the *Integrated Risk Management Framework*.

11. Crisis and Emergency Communication

While the terms "crisis" and "emergency" are not synonymous, effective communication is an integral part of both crisis and emergency management.

A "crisis" is a situation that somehow challenges the public's sense of appropriateness, tradition, values, safety, security or the integrity of the government. A crisis need not pose a serious threat to human life or property. Effective communication management is imperative to help maintain or restore the public's confidence in the government during times of crisis.

An "emergency" is an abnormal situation that requires prompt action, beyond normal procedures, in order to limit damage to persons, property or the environment. Some emergencies may also be, or become, crises; if, for example, it is perceived that the government has no control over a situation. Effective communication management is imperative before, during and after an emergency to help prevent injury or loss of life, to help limit damage to assets and property, to help maintain public services, to assist in the process of recovery, and to help maintain or restore public confidence in the government.

Under the *Emergency Preparedness Act,* institutions are required to prepare plans for dealing with emergencies.

Institutions must recognize that extraordinary and rapid efforts may be required in times of crisis or emergency. They must be prepared to adjust priorities and resources accordingly. The necessary plans, partnerships, tools and methods must be in place to allow government officials to communicate effectively and efficiently in both official languages during an emergency or a crisis.

Several government agencies at the national, provincial or local level may be involved in responding to an emergency or crisis. Co-operation with others, such as industry or community leaders and non-governmental organizations, may also be required.

Agreement among governments and their institutions regarding lead responsibility for communications during a crisis or an emergency is essential for the timely provision of accurate, relevant and consistent information. It is necessary to facilitate the delivery of services, to eliminate the potential for contradiction or confusion, and to demonstrate government leadership.

Lead institutions must undertake contingency planning and develop standard operating procedures. They must seek agreement with regional and local authorities on the co-ordination of government assistance and the designation of a single focus of responsibility for all communications with the public.

Lead responsibility must be identified as part of the planning process. Where it is unclear which government authority may have the lead in particular circumstances, institutions must seek guidance from the Privy Council Office.

12. Management and Co-ordination

Institutions must integrate communications into corporate management processes and procedures. Communications are a shared responsibility that must be co-ordinated with other areas of management.

Clear working links must be maintained at all times between communications and other core functions: policy and program management, service delivery, human resources management, information management, and the management of information technology.

Institutions must:

(a) develop, implement, manage and evaluate policies, programs, services and initiatives with the ongoing advice, support and involvement of specialists in government communications;

(b) ensure that the communications function – as outlined in *Appendix B* – has the resources needed to fulfil the requirements of this policy, and that resources are prudently managed;

(c) ensure an appropriate distribution of resources between headquarters and regions in all communications planning, management and delivery;

(d) ensure that staff at all levels carry out their unique role in, and shared responsibilities for, delivering and managing government communications;

(e) examine ways to increase efficiency in responding to communication issues, and adjust and simplify approval processes as necessary;

(f) ensure the coherence and consistency of information and messages across all channels of communication, from in-person service, telephone and mail, to facsimile, Internet and electronic transmission;

(g) collaborate with other institutions of the Government of Canada in communication activities that promote common or government-wide messages and themes; and

(h) seek the advice of the Privy Council Office on issues and themes which may have horizontal or government-wide implications that require co-ordination.

13. Planning and Evaluation

Institutions must integrate communication planning into their annual business planning process and evaluate communications work as an integral part of business operations. Business plans must take account of an institution's communication requirements.

Every institution must prepare a corporate communication plan that:

integrates governmental, ministerial and institutional priorities;

identifies target audiences inside and outside of the institution (citizens, stakeholder groups, etc.);

takes account of the views and concerns of audiences inside and outside of the institution (i.e. the internal and external environments);

delineates strategies, tools, messages and responsibilities for communicating with target audiences; and

sets out operational needs and resource allocations.

The corporate communication plan must be periodically reviewed, evaluated and updated in conjunction with the business planning and budgeting cycle.

Institutions must:

(a) ensure that communication planning forms an integral part of program and policy initiatives and that communication requirements are fully accounted for within budgets and financial plans;

(b) ensure that the public environment – particularly the views and needs of citizens – is assessed at all stages of an initiative and reflected in communication plans;

(c) ensure communication plans and strategies for policies, programs, services and initiatives are developed collaboratively with input from responsible managers in both headquarters and regional offices;

(d) reflect Government of Canada themes and messages in communication plans and strategies;

(e) work collaboratively with other Government of Canada institutions to develop joint communication plans and strategies in areas of mutual interest;

(f) share communication plans and evaluation findings with other Government of Canada institutions;

(g) provide communication plans to the Treasury Board Secretariat on request for information, monitoring or review;

(h) track the performance of communication products and measure results achieved against objectives set in communication and business plans;

(i) evaluate the effectiveness, including cost-effectiveness, of communication programs and campaigns developed in support of policy or program initiatives, and make improvements or adjustments as needed to ensure the efficacy of plans, strategies and activities;

(j) evaluate periodically (at least every three years) the degree to which their management practises comply with the requirements of this policy;

(k) include, when feasible, an assessment of the degree of compliance with this policy in their internal audits, evaluations and reviews of programs and services;

(l) comply with the requirements of the Treasury Board's *Internal Audit Policy, Evaluation Policy* and *Policy on Active Monitoring* when carrying out reviews, evaluations or audits related to communications; and

(m) provide audit and evaluation reports to the Treasury Board Secretariat when completed.

14. Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board Submissions

A Memorandum to Cabinet must include a communication plan and identify resources dedicated to achieving communication goals and objectives, as prescribed by the Cabinet Paper System.

A communication plan with budget information is also required in Treasury Board submissions that have not been the subject of a Memorandum to Cabinet and which concern significant investments of public funds, a major new policy, program, service or initiative, or matters in which the public has demonstrated or could express sensitivity and concern.

To ensure appropriate measures and adequate resources are recommended to meet planned communication objectives, the head of communications reviews the memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions an institution prepares.

15. Regional Operations

Regional offices responsible for delivering programs and services in the different regions of Canada must be involved in an institution's communication planning, development, implementation and evaluation.

Co-ordination between headquarters and regional operations in communication matters is essential. Regional communications staff must be included from the outset in planning and developing strategies to achieve an institution's communication objectives at the local or regional level.

Heads of communications and regional communications managers must confer regularly to ensure an institution's communication objectives are met in all regions of the country.

When issuing communications or public information with a regional focus or orientation, or when participating in a local event, institutions must ensure that appropriate senior staff from the regional operation(s) concerned are involved in communications planning, strategy and implementation. Similarly, regionally driven communication activities must involve headquarter operations.

Institutions must ensure that regional operations have the resources needed to carry out the requirements of this policy and to effectively manage the communications function. Institutions must ensure that all regional communications conform to the *Federal Identity Program*.

Regional events and activities frequently involve multiple institutions in communication planning and management. Communication Canada co-ordinates corporate communications of the Government of Canada in the different regions of the country. Working in consultation with the regional councils of senior federal officials, and their communications committees, Communication Canada supports and facilitates Government of Canada communications in the provinces and territories.

16. Internal Communication

Communication among managers and employees must be open and collaborative to achieve government goals and institutional missions, and to ensure quality information services for the public.

Internal communication must be two-way, a dialogue. Listening to employee ideas, concerns and suggestions for achieving results and improving service, and acting upon them, is just as important as keeping employees informed about the goals and priorities of an institution, or about developments, changes or new initiatives affecting their work. Taking account of the views and concerns of employee unions, representatives and associations can also lead to more effective organizational management.

Engaging employees in a conversation for action allows institutions to tap into a vast pool of intelligence and expertise. Properly engaged in the life of an organization, employees can be valuable allies in external communications – helping to inform the public, professional colleagues and prospective employees about their organization.

Internal communication is an integral part of an institution's corporate communications strategy and must be addressed in the corporate communication plan (see *Requirement 13* for further direction).

Effective internal communication is a shared management responsibility. The deputy head champions an institution's commitment to open and collaborative internal communications with the support of the entire management team. Collaboration, particularly between human resources management and the communications function, is essential to ensure internal communication requirements are met.

Managers and supervisors must communicate with employees openly, frequently, and before or at the same time as information is communicated to the public. Training in communications must be available to them to help ensure they are effective communicators.

To foster employee knowledge, awareness and understanding, internal communication includes a mix of published materials (in multiple formats), oral presentations, staff meetings and learning events. Representation on newsletter editorial boards, internal communication advisory committees and evaluation task forces provide additional avenues to engage managers and employees in a conversation for action.

Internal communication activities and processes must be reviewed from time to time to evaluate results, to identify areas for improvement, and to make adjustments as needed.

All internal communications must be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Official Languages Act* (particularly *Part V* concerning the language of work). Institutions must comply with the official language policies of the Treasury Board, particularly those concerning *Language of Work* and *Communications between Regions*.

Internal communication materials must be identified in accordance with the *Federal Identity Program*.

17. Technological Innovation and New Media

Institutions must maintain a capacity for innovation and stay current with developments in communications practice and technology. As they adopt new means of communication, institutions must continue to reach, in a timely manner, citizens whose access to technology may be limited or who prefer to receive government information through more traditional means.

To ensure new technology advances an institution's ability to connect with Canadians in efficient and practical ways, all investment plans and decisions must be developed collaboratively by managers in information technology, communications and other key functions, such as program and service delivery, and human resources.

Investments in new communications technology must serve to:

(a) enhance public access to information, programs and services;

(b) achieve efficiencies in the preparation, accessibility and dissemination of information, while preserving its availability to current and future generations;

(c) foster interactive communications with Canadians and facilitate public consultation in the development and delivery of policies, programs, services and initiatives; or

(d) improve service performance and integrate service delivery.

18. Internet and Electronic Communication

The Internet, World Wide Web and other means of electronic communication are powerful enablers for building and sustaining effective communication within institutions and with their clients across Canada and around the world.

An important tool for providing information and services to the public, the Internet facilitates interactive, two-way communication and feedback. It provides opportunities to reach and connect with Canadians wherever they reside, and to deliver personalized services.

Institutions must maintain an active presence on the Internet to enable 24-hour electronic access to public programs, services and information. Email and Web sites must be used to enable direct communications between Canadians and government institutions, and among public service managers and employees.

Institutions must advance Government of Canada online initiatives aimed at expanding the reach and quality of internal and external communications, improving service delivery, connecting and interacting with citizens, enhancing public access and fostering public dialogue.

Institutions must ensure that Internet communications conform to government policies and standards. Government of Canada themes and messages must be accurately reflected in electronic communications with the public and among employees.

To ensure congruence with other communication activities, an institution's Web sites, sub-sites and portals must be reviewed regularly by the head of communications, or his or her designate, who oversees and advises on Web content and design.

Web site managers, at headquarters and in regional offices, must consult with communications staff on the editorial and visual content of Web pages, including design and presentation, to ensure publishing standards and other communication requirements are met.

Collaboration is also required between communications and information technology specialists to ensure effective planning and management of electronic information services. Managers and employees responsible for the operational and technical aspects of an institution's Web-based systems work in consultation with communications staff who provide strategic advice on Web content and the use of technology for communication purposes. (Also see "Web site" references in *Requirements 23, 24, 26* and *27* concerning advertising, partnering, marketing and publishing.)

Institutions must:

(a) manage their Web sites and portals in accordance with the Treasury Board's *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines*;

(b) identify online information and services, including email messages, in accordance with the *Federal Identity Program*;

(c) ensure electronic communications conform to the requirements of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Official Language Policies* of the Treasury Board, including the *Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks*;

(d) be connected to the Government of Canada's Internet and Intranet portal sites, the *Canada Site* and *Publiservice*, managed by Communication Canada;

(e) ensure that Internet-published information on policies, programs, services and initiatives is regularly updated, accurate, easy to understand, and accessible in multiple formats for persons with disabilities;

(f) ensure that printed material for public dissemination is published concurrently on the Internet;

(g) incorporate mechanisms into on-line services for receiving and acknowledging public feedback;

(h) respect privacy rights and copyright ownership in all on-line publishing and communication – in compliance with the *Privacy Act,* the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* and the *Copyright Act*;

(i) ensure that information published on Web sites, prior to posting any changes or updates, is recorded and archived to assure long-term retention and the preservation of institutional memory – with timely and consistent processes for doing so

established in consultation with the managers of an institution's information holdings; and

(j) abide by the Treasury Board's *Policy on the Use of Electronic Networks, Management of Information Technology Policy, Management of Government Information Holdings Policy, Security Policy of the Government of Canada,* and *Privacy and Data Protection Policy.*

19. Media Relations

Journalists and other media representatives play an important role in the democratic process – providing the public with news and information about government, and reporting on the public's views and opinions of government. Institutions must cultivate proactive relations with the media to promote public awareness and understanding of government policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Institutions must operate and respond effectively in a 24-hour media environment. They must be able, on short notice, to reach and inform the media on issues of importance to decision-makers and the public. Institutions engage the media using a variety of communication tools, including news conferences, background or technical briefings, news releases, and audio-video presentations.

Institutions must facilitate information or interview requests from the media, and manage plans and strategies for communicating with the media. Institutions must consult their minister's office when planning media campaigns or strategies that could involve ministerial participation, or when preparing a response to a media enquiry that could have implications for the minister.

Institutions must respect the authority and responsibility of Parliament, whose members are entitled to learn about planned legislative initiatives before information about them is released to the media.

Institutions must ensure the quality and consistency of information services provided to the media in both official languages. Media enquiries, whether by phone, e-mail, letter or in person, must be addressed promptly to accommodate publication deadlines.

Institutions must ensure processes and procedures are in place to assist managers and employees in responding to media calls. Communication specialists responsible for media relations ensure that media requests, particularly for interviews or technical information on specialized subjects, are directed to knowledgeable managers or staff designated to speak as official representatives of their institution. (See *Requirement 20* for policy direction on spokespersons.)

20. Spokespersons

Ministers are the principal spokespersons of the Government of Canada. They are supported in this role by appointed aides, including executive assistants, communication directors and press secretaries in ministers' offices, and by the senior management teams of government institutions, which include deputy heads, heads of communications and other officials.

Ministers present and explain government policies, priorities and decisions to the public. Institutions, leaving political matters to the exclusive domain of ministers and their offices, focus their communication activities on issues and matters pertaining to the policies, programs, services and initiatives they administer.

An institution's senior management must designate managers and knowledgeable staff in head offices and in the regions to speak in an official capacity on issues or subjects for which they have responsibility and expertise.

Officials designated to speak on an institution's behalf, including technical or subject-matter experts, must receive instruction, particularly in media relations, to carry out their responsibilities effectively and to ensure the requirements of their institution and this policy are met. (See Requirement 19 for policy direction on media relations.)

Spokespersons, particularly senior managers, are often called upon to represent institutions before parliamentary committees and boards of inquiry. To ensure effective communication that respects official protocol, spokespersons must be familiar with Privy Council Office guidelines on appearing before Parliament and other official bodies.

Spokespersons at all times must respect privacy rights, security needs, matters before the courts, government policy, Cabinet confidences and ministerial responsibility. When speaking as an institution's official representative, they must identify themselves by name and position, speak on the record for public attribution, and confine their remarks to matters of fact concerning the policies, programs, services or initiatives of their institution.

21. Public Events and Announcements

Institutions, both at headquarters and in their regional offices, must identify opportunities to inform the public about significant initiatives or contributions of the Government of Canada. Public events and announcements, including news conferences, must be arranged from time to time for communication purposes.

Institutions determine whether they will participate in a public event or issue an announcement. They must contact their minister's office to determine if the minister or other parliamentarian(s) chosen by the minister will represent the government.

Institutions must plan and co-ordinate events with ministerial staff when a minister will attend, or with a parliamentarian's staff when a Member of Parliament or Senator will attend. When multiple institutions are involved in a public event or announcement, they must co-ordinate their participation with the Privy Council Office.

Institutions must ensure that the Government of Canada is appropriately identified and represented at events and announcements, including those involving other participants, such as other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, industry or business. Institutions must identify all materials, displays or presentations prepared for public events or announcements in accordance with the *Federal Identity Program*. Official language requirements must also be addressed.

Institutions must not participate in, or lend support to, partisan events organized for political party purposes.

22. *Fairs and Exhibitions*

Institutions must adopt a coherent and co-ordinated approach to their participation in fairs and exhibitions. Multiple institutions appearing at the same event must display a unified presence that promotes common themes and messages of the Government of Canada.

Exhibits and display materials must conform to the standards of the *Federal Identity Program* and to the requirements of the *Official Languages Act*. Methods for obtaining public feedback on specific or general issues of concern to an institution must be incorporated into all exhibits.

Communication Canada co-ordinates the participation of institutions in fairs and exhibitions visited by the Canada Pavilion. Participating institutions must co-locate within the pavilion site as arranged by Communication Canada.

As manager of the Government of Canada's *Fairs and Exhibits Program*, Communication Canada provides institutions with a current listing of those events for which it is the co-ordinating authority. Institutions must submit their exposition plans to Communication Canada well before an event takes place to permit efficient, co-ordinated planning and execution.

23. *Advertising*

Institutions may place advertisements or purchase advertising space or time in any medium to inform Canadians about their rights or responsibilities, about government policies, programs, services or initiatives, or about dangers or risks to public health, safety or the environment.

Institutions must determine their obligations under Sections 11 and 30 of the *Official Languages Act* to ensure compliance in all advertising. Moreover, institutions must

respect the Government of Canada's commitment, stated in Part VII of the *Act*, to enhance the vitality of official language minority communities. Advertising plans and campaigns must address the needs, concerns and language preferences of such communities. Media buys must include the purchase of advertising space and time in organs serving a community's official language minority, be it English or French.

The placement or purchase of advertising may also be directed at audiences outside of Canada to promote Canadian interests. Institutions must consult with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade when planning to advertise in foreign markets to ensure compatibility with government communications abroad.

Advertising placed in Canadian foreign language media is normally translated into the appropriate foreign language. If a translation is not available, the ad must appear in the two official languages of Canada each displayed with equal prominence in the same advertising space.

Institutions must not publish in their communication materials, services or vehicles, regardless of medium, advertisements from a private-sector or non-government source. Institutions must not sell advertising space or time, either on their Web sites or in any of their publications, to the private sector or to any source outside of government.

Institutions must avoid the appearance or public perception of endorsing or providing a marketing subsidy or an unfair competitive advantage to any person, organization or entity outside of government. Institutions must not advertise or publicly endorse the products or services they purchase or obtain from the private sector under contract. (See *Requirements 24* and *25* for further policy direction on advertising sponsorships and collaborative arrangements.)

Institutions must not use public funds to purchase advertising in support of a political party.

Institutions must suspend their advertising during general elections of the Government of Canada. Advertising is only permitted when: an institution is required by statute or regulation to issue a public notice for legal purposes; an institution must inform the public of a danger to health, safety or the environment; or an institution must post an employment or staffing notice. Otherwise, advertising plans and activities must be held in abeyance effective the day that the Governor in Council issues a writ for a general federal election, and must not resume until the day the newly elected government is sworn into office.

To ensure the integrity and efficacy of government advertising, institutions must:

(a) consistently and coherently reflect overarching government themes and messages in advertising plans and strategies, with advice from the Privy Council Office;

(b) submit their advertising plans to Communication Canada for review by the Government Advertising Committee;

(c) obtain a project registration number from Communication Canada for authorization to contract advertising services;

(d) contract advertising services through Public Works and Government Services Canada, and adhere to the requirements of the Treasury Board's *Contracting Policy* and *Common Services Policy* in all advertising procurement;

(e) ensure that advertising design and presentation conform to the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*;

(f) pre-test all major advertising campaigns to help ensure they meet stated objectives and forward the results to Communication Canada;

(g) evaluate all major advertising campaigns to assess their effectiveness in achieving stated objectives and forward the results to Communication Canada; and

(h) confer with Communication Canada when planning to use public opinion research to pre-test or evaluate major advertising campaigns.

24. Partnering and Collaborative Arrangements

Communication requirements must be taken into account when planning, negotiating or implementing a partnering or collaborative arrangement.

Joint activities or initiatives involving another government, a company, an organization, a group or an individual must be communicated in a manner that is fair and equitable to all parties. The parties involved in a collaborative arrangement have shared or compatible objectives, contribute resources (financial or in-kind), share in the benefits, and agree to a fair allocation of risk-taking.

Agreements governing collaborative arrangements establish the communication roles and responsibilities of the parties involved. Official languages, corporate identity, visibility, publishing, marketing and promotional activities are among the communication requirements delineated in partnering agreements.

Managers responsible for negotiating, implementing or administering collaborative arrangements must consult with their institution's head of communications, or his or her designate, for communication advice and support. Such consultation must take place prior to establishing a collaborative arrangement, as well as when one is under way, to ensure compatibility with the communication goals of the government and the institution.

When informing the public or publishing information about partnering activities, institutions must ensure that the contributions of all participants are fairly acknowledged and attributed. Corporate names and logos, without promotional tag lines, are appropriate identifiers for use in acknowledging the contributions of participants.

Institutions must use the "Canada" wordmark when identifying their own participation in a collaborative arrangement, as required under the *Federal Identity Program,* to enable public recognition of the contributions of the Government of Canada.

Institutions must ensure that the parties involved also acknowledge the Government of Canada's contribution in their own communications with the public.

In its communications with the public, whether on its Web sites or in any of its publications, an institution must not advertise the commercial products or services of private-sector participants. Information issued by an institution about a collaborative arrangement and its participants must be objective and factual, not promotional.

For the purpose of this policy, to ensure fair acknowledgement of contributors, the simple display of a corporate name or logo in communication materials intended for public dissemination in any medium does not constitute advertising.

A collaborative arrangement may include advertising or promotional efforts involving the media as part of a communication strategy. However, such efforts must not be the focus of partnering activities, but simply an aide to informing the public about them. (See *Requirement 23* for further direction on advertising.)

In all partnering and collaborative arrangements, institutions must:

(a) analyse the public environment and take account of the views, concerns and language preferences of citizens and stakeholders before entering into an agreement;

(b) be mindful of public perceptions, avoid conflicts of interest, uphold public trust and confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the Public Service, and honour the value and reputation of public institutions;

(c) determine whether a proposed partnering or collaborative arrangement constitutes an alternative service delivery initiative under the Treasury Board's criteria for such and, if so, adhere to the *Policy on Alternative Service Delivery*;

(d) ensure the deputy head is regularly informed of communication plans and activities related to partnering and collaborative arrangements;

(e) integrate information about partnering and collaborative arrangements into the institution's business and communication planning processes; and

(f) communicate the results of collaborative arrangements through normal audit, evaluation and performance reporting processes.

25. Sponsorships

Institutions both issue and receive sponsorships – arrangements in which one party provides another with financial resources or in-kind assistance to support a project or activity of mutual interest and benefit. Like all collaborative arrangements, sponsorships must be communicated in a manner that is fair and equitable to each party.

Institutions must acknowledge their sponsors when communicating with the public about a sponsored activity. Similarly, institutions must ensure sponsorship recipients – individuals, groups, companies or other governments – acknowledge the Government of Canada's contribution(s) to their activities.

Managers responsible for arranging or administering sponsorships must consult with their head of communications, or his or her designate, before issuing or accepting a sponsorship to ensure its compatibility with the government and institution's communication goals. The institution's deputy head must be regularly informed as well of communication plans and activities related to sponsorship arrangements. *Requirement 24(a)-(f)* also applies to sponsorships.

Institutions must not accept a sponsorship from the private sector in exchange for advertising the goods or services of the sponsor.

A sponsored project or activity may include advertising or promotional efforts involving the media as part of a communication strategy. However, such efforts must not be the focus of a sponsorship, but simply an aide to informing the public about it. (See Requirements 23 and 24 for further direction on advertising and partnering.)

26. Marketing

Marketing assists in promoting an institution's policies, programs, services and initiatives to the public. Institutions must integrate marketing with the communications function. This ensures that promotional activities, whether in support of specific market needs or broader policy objectives, advance the communication goals of the government and the institution.

To ensure congruence with other communication activities, the head of communications, or his or her designate, must review marketing plans and strategies before they are implemented.

Like other communication activities, the design and implementation of marketing initiatives, projects or campaigns must conform to the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*. Similarly, marketing efforts conducted through an institution's Web

site must conform to the requirements of the Treasury Board's *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines*.

In all marketing activities, institutions must comply with the *Official Languages Act* and the Treasury Board's *Official Language Policies*.

For direction on marketing an institution's sponsorships and collaborative arrangements, see *Requirements 24* and *25* above.

27. Publishing

Institutions must facilitate public access to their publications – all information materials, regardless of publishing medium, produced for public dissemination or for limited circulation outside of government.

To ensure public access to government publications, and that statutory requirements for government publishing are met, institutions must:

(a) maintain an index – accessible to the public – that lists all of an institution's published works, free and priced publications as well as co-publications;

(b) forward the index of published and co-published works with regular updates to Communication Canada for entry into the Government of Canada's central publishing database;

(c) provide copies of published works to the *Depository Services Program*, managed by Communication Canada;

(d) comply with the statutory requirements to publish legal and regulatory notices in the *Canada Gazette*, managed by Communication Canada;

(e) notify Communication Canada of publications they plan to produce for sale;

(f) ensure that publications for sale are not comprised primarily of information that otherwise must be provided free of charge as described in *Requirement 2*;

(g) make publications available in multiple formats on request, as stipulated in *Requirement 1(e)*;

(h) ensure that published material in all formats meets official language requirements and the design standards and requirements of the *Federal Identity Program*;

(i) follow the bibliographic standards set by the National Library of Canada and ensure that publications in all formats are assigned standard bibliographic reference numbers (International Standard Book Numbers or International Standard Serial Numbers);

(j) provide two copies of all publications, in all formats available and in both English and French, to the National Library of Canada in accordance with the *National Library Act*;

(k) ensure that publications available on their Web sites meet the Treasury Board's *Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines*;

(l) comply with the requirements of the Treasury Board's *Management of Government Information Holdings Policy* and *Common Services Policy*; and

(m) comply with the requirements of the Treasury Board's *Contracting Policy* when contracting for printing, editorial, design or distribution services.

28. Copyright and Licensing

Institutions must comply with the *Copyright Act* and ensure that the ownership rights associated with works subject to copyright are fully respected in all media applications.

Institutions must manage the administration and licensing of Crown copyright in co-ordination with Communication Canada. Institutions must comply with the Treasury Board's *Common Services Policy* and *Policy on Title to Intellectual Property Arising under Crown Procurement Contracts*. Institutions also must comply with the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program* with respect to Government of Canada symbols and identifiers protected under the *Trademarks Act*.

29. Film, Video and Multimedia Productions

The production, distribution and evaluation of motion picture films, videotapes, television programs, interactive videodiscs, CD ROMs and multimedia productions must be contracted through Public Works and Government Services Canada. PWGSC ensures the integrity of the contracting process between institutions and private- or public-sector producers. It oversees contracting, quality control and storage services, while institutions handle all other aspects of project management.

All film, video and multimedia productions commissioned by institutions must comply with the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program* and the Treasury Board's *Common Services* and *Contracting* policies. In accordance with the *National Library Act*, copies of all finished productions in film, video, CD and multimedia formats must be deposited with the National Library of Canada. Official language requirements also must be met.

30. Cataloguing and Securing Information

Communication materials and published information in all formats must be well-catalogued and securely maintained to ensure current as well as long-term accessibility.

Institutions must:

(a) ensure that communication records, documents and materials in any format are maintained in compliance with the *National Archives Act*;

(b) catalogue and describe their information holdings for use in *Info Source* as required by the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*;

(c) maintain an internal library where copies of all publications an institution issues, in all formats, are deposited to ensure long-term retention and access (in co-ordination with the National Library of Canada);

(d) maintain a current, comprehensive and well-structured identification or classification system or systems that provide effective means for organizing and locating information, as required by the Treasury Board's *Management of Government Information Holdings Policy*; and

(e) ensure that all requirements of the Treasury Board's *Management of Government Information Holdings Policy, Access to Information Policy, Security Policy of the Government of Canada* and *Privacy and Data Protection Policy* are met.

31. Training and Professional Development

Institutions must provide their managers and employees at all levels with orientation in the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada.* Incoming employees must be informed about the policy, and encouraged to familiarize themselves with it, upon appointment.

Institutions must:

(a) foster professional development among communications staff to ensure they are well-versed in the current tools and techniques of communications practice;

(b) plan for their communication training requirements, allocate adequate resources for staff training and development, and evaluate the effectiveness of training programs; and

(c) facilitate communications training for employees and managers, particularly those responsible for program and service delivery who work directly with the public, to assist them in developing the skills needed to be effective communicators for their institution.

Accountability

1. Ministers

Under the Canadian parliamentary system, ministers are accountable to the Prime Minister and to Parliament for presenting and explaining government policies, priorities and decisions to the public.

Ministers, both individually and collectively as members of Cabinet, are the principal spokespersons for the Government of Canada and its institutions. It is their role to provide leadership in establishing the priorities and overall themes of government communications.

Ministers:

- determine, together with their respective deputy heads, their communication priorities, objectives and requirements;
- approve the corporate communication plans of the institutions they head;
- define the responsibilities of ministerial staff with respect to communications; and
- establish, together with their respective deputy heads, effective liaison between ministerial staff and institutional heads of communications to ensure that the communication of policy and operational initiatives is co-ordinated, with particular attention to media relations and participation in public events and announcements.

2. Treasury Board of Canada and Secretariat

The Treasury Board of Canada is responsible for approving and promulgating general administrative policy for the Government of Canada, in accordance with the *Financial Administration Act*. Institutions subject to the *Act* are responsible, and their deputy heads are accountable, for meeting the requirements of Treasury Board policies.

The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat advises and supports the Board and its President in the development, implementation and management of administrative policy. The Secretariat has key responsibilities for the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada,* which include:

- developing, evaluating and reviewing government-wide communications policy;
- advising institutions on policy interpretation and application;
- monitoring policy implementation and compliance;

- assessing performance and results, and ensuring effective resource and expenditure management related to the communications function;

- directing, co-ordinating and monitoring implementation of the *Federal Identity Program*; and

- designating, in collaboration with the Privy Council Office, lead institutions to develop communications policy requirements, guidelines and procedures for the approval of the Treasury Board as required.

3. Cabinet Committee on Government Communications

The Cabinet Committee on Government Communications provides oversight on the government's overall communication strategy or approach.

The Privy Council Office (PCO) advises and supports the Committee, helping to set and manage its agenda. PCO informs institutions of the outcomes of Committee meetings and advises on strategic direction to increase the effectiveness and coherence of communication initiatives throughout the government.

4. Privy Council Office

The Privy Council Office has a central role in the co-ordination and management of government communications, as determined by the Prime Minister and Cabinet. It is responsible for:

- advising Cabinet on communication strategies;

- supporting and co-ordinating the implementation of Cabinet decisions across government;

- monitoring and evaluating the implementation of Cabinet direction on communications;

- collecting and analyzing information on the public environment in order to advise the Prime Minister, ministers and institutions on the management of public issues;

- chairing the Government Advertising Committee (GAC), which reviews and advises on the advertising plans of institutions, helping to ensure their consistency with key government priorities and compliance with relevant policies;

- advising institutions of government priorities and themes to be reflected in communication plans and strategies;

- providing institutions with advice and support in communication planning and management;

- advising institutions on communication issues related to the planning, management and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives;

- co-ordinating and supporting the organization and implementation of horizontal or government-wide communications, by designating lead institutions and assigning special responsibilities;

- providing guidance on communication protocol for public service managers and employees appearing before parliamentary committees or boards of inquiry;

- facilitating the exchange of information among institutions; and

- providing, in collaboration with the Treasury Board Secretariat, government-wide leadership for the continuous development of the communications community within the Public Service of Canada.

5. Deputy Heads

For the purpose of this policy, deputy heads include all deputy ministers appointed to the government departments listed in Schedule I, and the appointed heads of all institutions listed in Schedules I.1 and II, of the *Financial Administration Act*.

Deputy heads lead, and are responsible for, the overall management of communications and its integration with other key functions, particularly policy and program management. They champion an institution's internal communications.

Deputy heads are accountable to:

- their ministers, for ensuring the government's communication priorities and requirements are met;

- the Clerk of the Privy Council, for ensuring that their institutions' communications fully reflect government-wide policies, themes and priorities, and that the communications function is fully integrated into the planning, management and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives; and

- the Secretary of the Treasury Board, for implementing this policy within their institutions and for carrying out related directives, instructions or administrative procedures that the Secretary may issue from time to time.

Deputy heads must ensure that any instructions issued by the Clerk of the Privy Council, and all relevant Cabinet decisions, concerning communication priorities of the Government of Canada are fully implemented.

Deputy heads must ensure that the requirements of the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* are fulfilled in all operations of the institutions they lead, both within Canada and abroad. This includes ensuring that institutions manage both internal and external communications according to the values and principles expressed in the policy.

An institution's deputy head shall designate a senior official, referred to herein as the head of communications, to support the deputy head in the implementation and application of this policy.

6. *Heads of Communications and Communications Staff*

The head of communications is the senior official designated to support the deputy head in co-ordinating and directing their institution's implementation of this policy.

Heads of communications are members of senior management and report directly to deputy heads. They are accountable to deputy heads for managing the communications function, as described in *Appendix B* of this policy, both at the headquarters and in the regional offices of institutions. They are also accountable for ensuring that the corporate identity requirements of the Government of Canada, as determined by the *Federal Identity Program*, are adhered to in all applications.

Heads of communications manage corporate identity, advertising, publishing, marketing, environment analysis, public opinion research, media relations, event participation, and other communication activities. They oversee an institution's Web content to ensure it meets communication standards. They also manage horizontal communication issues and priorities that involve a number of government institutions as identified and co-ordinated by the Privy Council Office.

Heads of communications and communications staff are actively involved in the planning, management and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives – providing communications advice and support in all phases of operation.

The head of communications must ensure that the activities of an institution's communications staff, at headquarters and in regional offices, conform to the requirements of this policy regardless of reporting relationships or placement within organizational structures.

Communications staff carry out all duties associated with the communications function. Advocating on behalf of those who will or should receive information, communications staff ensure the clarity and utility of information for the end user. They work collaboratively with other key personnel (as noted in subsection 7 below) providing communications advice and support.

7. Policy Advisers, Program Managers and Functional Specialists

The communications function is a shared responsibility that requires the support, co-operation and interaction of various personnel throughout an institution. Policy advisers, program managers and other functional specialists – analysts, researchers, human resource officers, access to information and privacy co-ordinators, marketing specialists, information technologists, Web masters, graphic artists, librarians, receptionists and call-centre staff – must carry out the requirements of this policy in all aspects of their work. Their supervisors must ensure that the head of communications, or his or her designate, is consulted on all activities and initiatives involving communication with the public or which have implications for an institution's internal communications.

Such personnel must participate actively in the planning, co-ordination and implementation of an institution's communications, including the use of new technologies. Their co-operation is required to ensure sufficient resources for communications are allocated within operational budgets. Active working links and ongoing liaison with communications staff are imperative to ensure that an institution's communication needs, both domestic and international, are fully accounted for and addressed in all program and policy activities.

Collaboration among policy advisers, program managers, analysts, researchers, marketing specialists and communications staff ensures that public needs and concerns are routinely identified and addressed in the planning, management and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives. It also ensures that the communication goals and priorities of the government are consistently and coherently reflected in programs and services.

Collaboration between specialists in human resources and communications staff ensure that an institution's internal communication requirements are met. Collaboration among information technologists, Web masters, call-centre operators, graphic artists and communications staff ensures that proposed activities or methods of communication are technically feasible and practical.

Librarians assist institutions in providing public access to information and in organizing and retaining published materials in all formats according to internationally accepted standards. Librarians play an active role in every phase of the information life cycle, from assistance to authors and editors, to publication management and dissemination, ensuring current and long-term access to government information, and preserving the nation's published heritage.

Co-operation with access to information and privacy (ATIP) co-ordinators or advisers is also required. Such personnel ensure that the appropriate institutional officials are informed in a timely manner of information that is being disclosed to the public. Communications staff assist ATIP co-ordinators as needed to ensure that requests under

the *Access to Information Act* are promptly and fully addressed in accordance with the legislation.

8. Communication Canada

Communication Canada is mandated to improve communications between the Government of Canada and Canadians. While individual institutions focus their communications on specific areas of activity, Communication Canada approaches communicating with citizens as a corporate matter concerning the government as a whole. It assists institutions and the government in monitoring the public environment and in responding to citizen needs for information on the government's overall direction, priorities and broad range of policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Communication Canada helps to develop and improve government communications in the various regions of Canada. It assists in the co-ordination of regional communication activities, working collaboratively with regional communications managers and the communications committees of the regional councils of senior Federal officials in the provinces and territories.

As a common service agency, Communication Canada provides institutions with a number of mandatory and optional communication services to ensure overall consistency with government policies and priorities.

It serves as the central co-ordinating authority for public opinion research, electronic media monitoring, government publishing, and participating in fairs and exhibitions. It also supports the Government Advertising Committee, chaired by the Privy Council Office, and is responsible for issuing project registration numbers permitting institutions to contract advertising services through Public Works and Government Services Canada.

Representing the Queen's Printer for Canada, Communication Canada is responsible for the administration of Crown copyright and for the management of priced publications throughout the Government of Canada.

In accordance with the *Statutory Instruments Act and Regulations*, the Queen's Printer is also responsible for publishing the *Canada Gazette,* the official newspaper of the Government of Canada. Communication Canada provides a common service co-ordination role to government institutions required by statute to publish in Part I of the *Gazette*.

Communication Canada also maintains the Government of Canada's central publishing database and acts as a central warehouse and distribution channel for the priced publications of government institutions. It manages the *Depository Services Program* as well.

Facilitating public access to government information and electronic services, Communication Canada manages 1 800 O-Canada and the government's primary site on the Internet – the Canada Site portal. It also manages Publiservice, the government's Intranet site for public service managers and employees.

Communication Canada works co-operatively with institutions to advance the government's corporate and regional communication goals. Its activities are co-ordinated with those of the Privy Council Office and Treasury Board Secretariat to help ensure that general administrative policy and Cabinet direction are followed by all government institutions.

9. Public Works and Government Services Canada

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) operates as a common service agency for the Government of Canada. It provides institutions with various mandatory and optional services to ensure that government communications are well integrated and cost effective pursuant to Treasury Board policies.

PWGSC ensures the integrity of the government contracting process for publishing, advertising, public opinion research and media monitoring services, for film, video and multimedia productions, and for fairs and exhibitions. PWGSC co-ordinates contracting services with institutions to ensure consistent and efficient delivery of government communications.

To ensure sound financial management and the consistent application of Treasury Board policies and directives, PWGSC provides to the Treasury Board Secretariat, as required, information and advice on the allocation of expenditures in contracts for communication services.

10. National Library of Canada

The National Library of Canada helps to ensure that information published by institutions is available and accessible to decision makers and the public both in the immediate and long-term. It works with institutions to preserve the nation's published heritage.

Under the *National Library Act*, institutions are required to deposit all newly published material in various formats with the National Library. Managing the redistribution of library materials institutions have declared surplus, the Library helps to preserve access to published information for current and future generations.

Responsible for co-ordinating government library services, the National Library also has audit and evaluation responsibilities with respect to the materials institutions publish. It monitors whether published material in all formats is deposited with an institution's internal library as well as with the National Library. It also monitors the management of

an institution's published material, and reports and advises on its long-term access and preservation in all formats.

11. Public Service Commission of Canada

The Public Service Commission of Canada is responsible for the development and application of standards for the recruitment, selection and evaluation of qualified personnel to meet the requirements of the communications function. It advises institutions on the identification and assessment of employment qualifications, including language skills, to ensure that competent communications staff are hired and promoted at all levels of the Public Service, including the executive group.

Monitoring

The Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) will monitor and evaluate implementation of this policy throughout the Government of Canada. Evaluations will be conducted by TBS to assess the effectiveness of institutions in meeting the policy requirements and to assess the effectiveness of the policy in helping the government to meet its objectives.

Evaluation findings will contribute to a formal review of this policy to take place within five years of its effective date. Evaluations of communications management by institutions will also inform the policy review and provide input to the development of best practices in this area. In monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of communications management practices, TBS and institutions will conform to the Treasury Board's *Policy on Active Monitoring*, *Evaluation Policy* and *Internal Audit Policy*.

TBS will monitor compliance with all aspects of this policy in a variety of ways that can include: media and parliamentary scanning; tracking information requests and correspondence; Web site navigation; examining communication plans, strategies, reviews, audits, evaluations and related documents (as shown in Table 1 below). Investigative reports and special studies by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner and the Office of the Information Commissioner may also be reviewed.

The Privy Council Office will monitor the implementation of Cabinet direction on communications by reviewing communication plans and through ongoing liaison with institutions.

Procedures

As stated in the *Policy Requirements*, institutions must co-ordinate certain communication activities with Communication Canada (CC) or with Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC). To ensure efficient co-ordination, institutions must follow all administrative procedures established for these activities, listed in Table 2 below.

The Secretary of the Treasury Board issues mandatory administrative procedures supporting the policy requirements. Such procedures are developed with the support and advice of CC and PWGSC, which co-ordinate their administration with institutions, as well as through consultations with the Privy Council Office.

Copies of all relevant procedures institutions must follow under this policy are available through the responsible centre(s) shown below.

Table 1

Policy Requirement	Monitored Plans and Activities
8(a)	Public opinion research plans and reports.
10	Plans and strategies for communicating risk.
11	Plans and strategies for crisis and emergency communications.
13	Corporate communication plan, periodic reviews and updates.
13(c)-(m)	Communication plans and strategies for policies, programs, services and initiatives. Audit and evaluation plans and reports.
14	Communication plans in Memoranda to Cabinet and Treasury Board submissions.
19	Media plans and strategies.
21	Plans for public events and announcements.
22	Exposition plans for fairs and exhibitions.
23(b) and (f)-(h)	Advertising plans, pre-testing and evaluations.
24	Plans and agreements for partnering and collaborative arrangements.
24(f)	Audit and evaluation reports for collaborative arrangements.
25	Sponsorship plans and agreements, audit and evaluation reports.
26	Marketing plans and strategies.
27(e)	Publishing plans for priced publications.
31(b)	Communication training plans for managers and employees.

Table 2

Policy Requirement	Activity	Responsible Centre
1(k)	Registering with 1 800 O-Canada and the Canada Site.	CC
7	Accessing the electronic media monitoring service.	CC
8(a),(b),(c) 23(g)	Planning and contracting public opinion research.	CC/PWGSC
18(d)	Connecting to the Government of Canada Internet (Canada Site) and Intranet (Publiservice) portals.	CC
22	Participating in fairs and exhibitions.	CC
23(a)-(h)	Planning, contracting and evaluating advertising.	CC/PWGSC
27(b),(c)	Registering publications with the *Depository Services Program* and central publishing database.	CC
27(d)	Publishing notices in the *Canada Gazette*.	CC
27(e),(f)	Planning and producing publications for sale.	CC
28	Administration and licensing of Crown copyright.	CC
29	Contracting film, video and multimedia productions.	PWGSC

Guidelines

The Secretary of the Treasury Board issues guidelines from time to time to assist institutions in applying this policy and in adopting best practices in various areas of government communications. Institutions must familiarize themselves with these guidelines, which are published as annexes to this policy (see page 46 for a complete listing).

References

1. Legislation

This policy must be read and applied in accordance with the laws of Canada. Legislation of particular importance to government communications includes the:

Access to Information Act
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Canadian Multiculturalism Act
Copyright Act
Emergency Preparedness Act
Financial Administration Act
National Archives Act
National Library Act
Official Languages Act and Regulations
Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act
Privacy Act
Publication of Statutes Act
Statutory Instruments Act and Regulations
Trade-marks Act

Treasury Board policies, guidelines and procedures derived from these statutory provisions set out requirements with respect to communications.

2. *Related Policies*

This policy must be read and applied in conjunction with the following administrative policies of the Government of Canada issued by the Treasury Board:

Access to Information Policy
Common Look and Feel for the Internet: Standards and Guidelines
Common Services Policy
Contracting Policy
Evaluation Policy
Federal Identity Program
Integrated Risk Management Framework
Internal Audit Policy
Management of Government Information Holdings Policy
Management of Information Technology Policy
Official Language Policies
Policy on Active Monitoring
Policy on Alternative Service Delivery
Policy on the Use of Electronic Networks
Policy on Title to Intellectual Property Arising under Crown Procurement Contracts
Policy on Using the Official Languages on Electronic Networks
Privacy and Data Protection Policy
Security Policy of the Government of Canada

Enquiries

Institutions must direct any questions about this policy to their respective heads of communications, who in turn may contact the Treasury Board Secretariat regarding its application and interpretation.

Appendix A: Definitions

Guidelines *(Lignes directrices)* – information, usually in the form of best practices, intended to help institutions carry out government policy efficiently and effectively. Guidelines are not mandatory with respect to the policy they support.

Institutions *(Institutions)* – includes, for the purpose of this policy, all departments, agencies, boards, councils, commissions and other bodies identified in Schedules I, I.1 and II of the *Financial Administration Act*.

Policy *(Politique)* – provides authoritative direction to government institutions on a given subject and determines the discretion for making decisions regarding that subject.

Policy requirements *(Exigences de la politique)* – the specific actions that institutions must take to achieve the Policy Objective and to promote the fundamental principles outlined in the Policy Statement.

Procedures *(Procédures)* – support a policy by describing routine operations that institutions must carry out.

Appendix B: The Communications Function

Communications are central to the work and management of the Government of Canada. As a function of good management, open and proactive communication ensures that the public receives government information, and that the views and concerns of the public are taken into account in the planning, management and evaluation of policies, programs, services and initiatives.

Government communications represent a vital public service that involves both providing information and listening to the public. To develop policies, programs and services that meet the needs of a diverse public, the government must understand the environment within which it operates and respond to the concerns of the public in relevant and useful ways. This includes communicating in the official language of a person's choice, and producing information in multiple formats to accommodate diverse needs.

Communications entail more than simply providing or receiving information. The manner in which information is exchanged is also important. The quality and timeliness of the transaction has an impact on the value of the information and the credibility of its source.

Communications within the Government of Canada is a shared responsibility involving officials and employees at all levels. Effective policy and program development and administration requires co-operation and co-ordination throughout the government: among ministers, senior officials, policy advisers, analysts, program managers, communications staff, specialists in human resources, information technologists, Web masters, graphic artists, researchers, marketing specialists, access to information and privacy co-ordinators, librarians, receptionists, call-centre staff and others.

Co-operation and co-ordination between institutions are also necessary to better serve and inform the public. It ensures that government themes and priorities are clearly and consistently reflected in the information and messages communicated to Canadians at home and abroad.

In budgeting for and delivering communication services, it is essential that all elements of the communications function be properly resourced. Sufficient resources must be allocated to all local, regional, national and international operations to ensure the requirements of the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* are fulfilled.

The communications function, under the stewardship of heads of communications in all institutions of the Government of Canada, includes the following:

Effective and Accountable Management

- providing leadership, support and advice to ensure that communications are integrated in all phases of policy and program planning, development, implementation, marketing and management;

- applying the principles and practices of good management to the co-ordination of research, analysis, advice and planning, and to the organization and implementation of communication programs and activities;

- preparing and implementing communication plans and strategies – including analyses of the internal and external environments – in support of policies, programs, services and initiatives;

- assessing performance and evaluating results, learning, and adjusting processes and activities to enhance effectiveness;

- providing effective resource and expenditure management;

- ensuring appropriate accountability and reporting mechanisms to Parliament and central agencies for the administration of all communication activities;

- ensuring the inclusion of communication plans, and the identification of dedicated resources, in memoranda to Cabinet and in Treasury Board submissions;

- co-ordinating activities with ministers' offices to advance the communication goals and priorities of the government;

- providing communications support and advice to ministers and senior officials on (non-partisan) government matters, including the preparation of speeches, news releases, briefing notes, presentations, memoranda and correspondence;

- collaborating with other Government of Canada institutions to promote common communication objectives;

- providing advice and support in the establishment and management of collaborative arrangements and sponsorships;

- integrating corporate communication planning with annual business planning and budgeting cycles;

- ensuring coherence and consistency of communications across all channels – telephone, in-person, mail, publications, Web sites, and so forth;

- integrating all communication activities, including Internet applications, marketing, advertising, public opinion research and media relations to promote consistent and well co-ordinated communications with the public;

- advising on and assisting in the development of internal communication strategies and activities that recognize and support the role all employees have in communicating with the public;

- supporting an open, co-operative and consultative culture throughout the workplace, which includes being open to the views and concerns of employee unions, representatives and associations regarding workplace issues;

- advising on information management to ensure effective use of information technologies and electronic communications;

- advising on and assisting in risk communication; and

- advising on and assisting in crisis and emergency communications.

Values and Ethics

- informing the public about policies, programs, services and initiatives in an accountable, non-partisan fashion consistent with the principles of Canadian parliamentary democracy and ministerial responsibility;

- communicating in a manner that affirms Canadian values of freedom, openness, security, caring and respect;

- ensuring that public trust and confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the Public Service of Canada are upheld;

- honouring the value and reputation of the government and public institutions in all communication activities;

- working collaboratively with institutions to serve the public interest;

- providing useful, timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information to the public in both official languages;

- respecting privacy rights, security needs and matters before the courts; and

- avoiding conflicts of interest and the appearance or public perception of endorsing, or providing a marketing subsidy or an unfair competitive advantage to, any person, organization or entity outside of government.

Listening and Evaluating

- researching and analyzing public issues and the public environment to help identify and assess the wants, needs and views of Canadians with respect to existing or proposed policies, programs, services and initiatives;

- maintaining open communications with the public and developing proactive strategies for assessing and addressing public concerns;

- learning about the views, priorities, needs and expectations of Canadians through various means, including enquiry analysis, citizen feedback, media coverage and opinion research;

- advising on and assisting in public consultations and citizen engagement;

- planning, conducting or contracting and analyzing public opinion research;

- providing, co-ordinating or contracting media monitoring services;

- evaluating communication programs and activities against planned objectives and professional standards, and making adjustments or improvements as needed; and

- monitoring and evaluating the degree to which management practises comply with the requirements of this policy.

Meeting Diverse Needs

- preparing, producing and disseminating information using all forms of media and graphic arts, including electronic publishing;

- advocating on behalf of those who will or should receive information to ensure its clarity and utility for the end user;

- communicating in English and French – complying with official language requirements in all communications;

- communicating with the public and providing information services through the Internet and other electronic media while ensuring more traditional or alternative forms of communication are available to meet the needs of all Canadians;

- recognizing the special needs of many Canadians, including literacy levels and perceptual or physical challenges, and designing and delivering communication tools to respond to those needs; and

- recognizing the diverse nature of Canadian society and ensuring that communications are fair, balanced and representative.

Outreach

- applying marketing, citizen engagement and consultation techniques to foster citizen feedback or to enhance public access to, awareness and use of government policies, programs, services and initiatives;

- planning, co-ordinating and implementing regional, national and international activities that integrate major objectives of the government, ministers and institutions;

- planning, co-ordinating, implementing and evaluating advertising, publishing and public awareness programs and campaigns;

- building and maintaining communication partnerships with various sectors of society to help meet the diverse information needs of Canadians and to achieve government objectives;

- building and maintaining effective relations with journalists and other communicators; and

- planning, co-ordinating and promoting the government's participation in public events, including fairs and exhibitions.

Corporate Identity and Visibility

- enabling the public to recognize clearly the activities of the Government of Canada and its institutions by means of consistent identification;

- applying the requirements of the *Federal Identity Program* in all presentations, and promoting a common look in all communication activities, to ensure accountability and public recognition of the Government of Canada;

- ensuring appropriate use of the official symbols and signatures of the Government of Canada in all media applications, as prescribed by the *Federal Identity Program*;

- ensuring effective management of an institution's identity consistent with government-wide priorities;

- promoting sound management practices related to information design and identification;

- ensuring appropriate identification of government participation in public events, including fairs and exhibitions;

- ensuring appropriate identification of government participation in sponsorships and collaborative arrangements; and

- reflecting key government themes and messages in information and communication materials so that overarching goals and the government's priorities for the country are consistently identified and communicated to the public and among employees.

Annex: Guidelines

Best practice guidelines in various areas of communications management will be developed over time and published as annexes to the *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada.*

The Treasury Board Secretariat will notify institutions as each set of guidelines becomes available.

Listed below are 17 subject areas for which guidelines are planned:

Advertising
Crisis and Emergency Communication
Environment Analysis
Evaluation
Events and Announcements
Fairs and Exhibitions
Internal Communication
Internet and Electronic Communication
Marketing
Media Relations
Multiple Formats
Partnering, Collaborative Arrangements and Sponsorships
Plain Language
Planning, Management and Co-ordination
Publishing
Regional Communications
Risk Communication